FY2007 PEER-TO-PEER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Division of Community Services (DCS) is pleased to announce the start of the Peer-to-Peer Technical Assistance Program for FY2007. DCS provides small grants to non-entitlement communities for short-term problem solving or technical assistance projects. Municipalities may apply for grants of up to $1000 to pay for up to 30 hours ($900) of technical assistance and up to $100 for reimbursement of travel, photocopying and/or the cost of incidental materials.

The FY2007 Program focuses on technical assistance related to community development and capacity building related to community development at the local level. All communities are encouraged to apply for funding, as described below. However, because funds are limited and a rolling application process is being used, applications will be funded on a first-come, first-served basis. The Peer-to-Peer Program is funded with Massachusetts' CDBG technical assistance funds.

Rolling Application Process

- A municipality's Board of Selectmen or chief executive writes a letter describing a problem or issue that can be addressed or solved by the short-term technical assistance of an official in another community.
- A board, commission or department may also submit a request for assistance. Such a request must include a vote of the Board of Selectmen or letter of support from the Mayor or City Manager approving the request.
- A community may recommend a specific individual to serve as its Peer in its request letter or solicit DHCD's assistance in finding a suitable Peer.
- Send the request letter and, if appropriate, the required vote or letter of support to:
  DHCD Peer-to-Peer Technical Assistance Program, attention John Fitzgerald, Urban Development Coordinator, 100 Cambridge Street, Suite 300, Boston, MA 02114.

DHCD's Review Process

- The request is reviewed to ensure that it meets the following requirements:
  (1) It does not give an unfair advantage to one community over another in a competitive situation, i.e., preparing a grant application or recruiting a specific business;
  (2) It does not propose as a Peer either a municipal official who is an elected or appointed official or an employee of the community making the request.
- If the letter suggests a Peer, DHCD reviews its list to see if this Peer is on the current list. If the Peer is not on the list, DHCD contacts the proposed Peer to see if she/he is willing to complete an application to serve as a Peer. If no Peer is suggested, DHCD identifies a suitable Peer from its list of applications on file.
- DHCD discusses the project with both the requesting community and the Peer to ensure that they are willing to work together and that the project, as described, is achievable for the available funding.

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- All eligible requests will be funded provided funding is available and there is sufficient time between the award date and the end of the fiscal year to complete the project.
- Once an award is made, a grant contract between DHCD and the municipality is prepared. It includes a scope of services based on the request letter that directs the municipality to hire the designated Peer to do the project as described.

Municipal Responsibilities

- Designate a local contract manager.
- Sign and return the contract to DHCD. **Wait until a fully executed copy of the contract is returned from DHCD before implementing the project.**
- Contact the Peer and set up a work schedule and, if desired, a work agreement that includes the contract scope of services. Carry out tasks agreed upon with the Peer to undertake the project.
- Request a contract amendment if modifications are needed in the scope of services.
- Implement the project. Upon project completion, the Peer prepares a final report for the municipality and submits an invoice that details the number of hours worked and incidental expenses incurred.
- Submit a copy of the Peer report, a copy of the invoice, a Peer-to-Peer Program Evaluation Form and a letter requesting the payment covered by the invoice to DHCD.
- When all required reporting information is submitted and complete, DHCD pays the municipality. The municipality subsequently forwards payment to the Peer.

Sample Projects Include:

- Grant start-up and record keeping processes
- Developing guidelines for housing rehabilitation programs
- Developing guidelines for commercial rehabilitation programs
- Economic development plan for enterprise community and criteria for certification of businesses
- Downtown revitalization
- Establishing micro enterprise assistance programs
- Preparing for a GIS needs assessment
- Developing policies for economic development, septic system betterment programs, revolving loan funds, etc.
- Community development-related management capacity study
- Historic preservation

If you have any questions about the Peer-to-Peer Program, would like to discuss a proposed application, or are a locally elected or appointed official with expertise you could share as a **Peer Consultant**, contact John Fitzgerald, Urban Development Coordinator, at (617) 573-1446 or John.Fitzgerald@state.ma.us.